

addressed by the International Relations Committee. The second reason I oppose this language is because I believe that it is bad policy.

Our foreign assistance dollars are used to help people in developing countries. One of the greatest challenges facing these countries is quality of health care. Family planning services are the fundamental services that are directly needed by women and children. Further, these services provide the basis from which to address infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. Without family planning services, you cannot effectively address the overall health needs of people in the developing world. It is as simple as that.

The restrictions in Section 587 further inhibit an already over-challenged program. USAID has not even begun to meet the increasing demand for family planning services. Bureaucracy coupled with historically low funding effectively cripple this program. Safeguards have been in place and enforced for over two decades to be sure that U.S. law is followed by international organizations. If we want to improve the health care provided with U.S. funds to people in developing countries, we must begin to facilitate the delivery of these services instead of making it more difficult.

I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for offering this amendment and encourage our colleagues support it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Greenwood-Lowey amendment to strike Section 587 from H.R. 4811.

Section 587, known as the "global gag rule" or the Mexico City language, is not just anti-family planning, it is anti-democracy and anti-free speech. Section 587 denies U.S. family planning assistance to any organization operating overseas that uses its own non-U.S. funds to provide abortion services or engage in advocacy related to abortion.

Voluntary family planning prevents maternal and child deaths, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Time and again, studies have shown that access to international family planning programs is one of the most effective means of reducing abortions. Additionally, in many communities, the local family planning provider is the only source of primary health care for the entire family.

These important programs should not be burdened by restrictions that would be illegal if imposed in the United States. More than illegal, they would be unconstitutional. Why would we want to undermine the right of foreign NGOs to freedom of speech and the right to participate in their countries' democratic processes? That's what Section 587 demands.

Why would we want to erect barriers to the development of democracy in these countries, the promotion of civil society, and the enhancement of women's participation in the political and economic mainstream? That's what Section 587 demands.

And why would we want to undermine the international credibility of the United States' commitment to promote women's health and women's participation in democracy abroad? That's what Section 587 demands.

Section 587 is an extremist position. I urge my colleagues to strike it from this bill. Support the Greenwood-Lowey amendment.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Greenwood Amendment, which

will strike Section 587 of this foreign aid spending bill.

Today, we have a chance to help developing nations around the world by correcting an egregious error in U.S. foreign policy: the global gag rule.

The gag rule is a shameful policy that punishes developing nations for doing precisely what we consistently encourage them to do: strengthen their democratic institutions by promoting and protecting freedom of speech.

The gag rule forbids U.S. foreign assistance from going to organizations that use their own, non-U.S. funds to lobby their government on reproductive issues.

The promotion of free speech is a principal goal of U.S. foreign policy and essential to the development of democratic forms of government. The United States—which prides itself on its protection of basic human rights, like freedom of speech—should not restrict these rights in other nations.

I hear all the time—and wholeheartedly agree—that opening up trade with China will lead to greater freedoms to speak in that country, which in turn will promote democracy.

But when it comes to family planning, we suddenly want to stifle voices within developing nations. We want to limit their right to speak out. We force them to relinquish their right to free speech in order to participate in U.S.-supported family planning programs. We force on these NGOs restrictions that would be unconstitutional were they imposed on U.S. organizations.

Mr. Chairman, intentional family planning programs worldwide save the lives of mothers and children, profoundly benefit women's social and economic situations, and dramatically reduce the incidence of abortion.

The global gag rule on international family planning stifles the ability of these programs to operate, placing the lives of mothers and their children at stake.

These misguided restrictions were included as part of the FY 2000 Consolidated Appropriations bill and they are again included in Section 587 of the bill we are considering today.

If we do not remove this provision, we will defund organizations that help reduce the number of abortions worldwide. These organizations provide voluntary, preventative family planning services. They help prevent a number of serious global problems, including: mother and infant mortality, unemployment, illiteracy and Third World debt.

According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, every day approximately 1,600 women die of complications stemming from pregnancy and childbirth. That is about 600,000 women dying each year from pregnancy-related causes. And complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death and disability for women in developing countries aged 15 to 49.

Studies show family planning and reproductive health services can help prevent one in four of those needless deaths. And, in addition to preventing maternal deaths, family planning can reduce the millions of long-term illnesses and disabilities that result each year from pregnancy-related complications.

Family planning also helps women space births, which is critical to improving the health of their children. Just by increasing the time between births or the age of first motherhood, family planning can reduce infant and child mortality by up to 25 percent.

Mr. Chairman, we need to repeal the global gag rule. Let's pass this amendment, and let's put an end to this annual debate.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment, which would strike the global gag rule from this bill.

This anti-democratic policy forces NGOs in the developing world to sacrifice their right to free speech in order to participate in our family planning programs. And while restricting foreign NGOs in this way may only offend our democratic sensibilities, if we tried to do this at home it would be absolutely unconstitutional.

Section 587 of the bill, severely damages our international family planning programs. The demand for these programs is much larger than our limited funds can meet, and Section 587 imposes an arbitrary cap on family planning, which is \$156 million below the President's request. Very simply, our family planning programs save lives. Six hundred thousand women die each year of pregnancy-related causes that are often preventable. More than 150 million married women in the developing world want contraceptives, but have no access to them. Increasing access to family planning will save the lives of women and children, and it will reduce the incidence of abortion worldwide. Striking this section will reduce the number of abortions performed each day—if you support this objective, you should support this amendment.

We need to consider the global gag rule within the overall context of U.S. foreign policy. What values do we want to export along with our foreign assistance?

The gag rule says to our NGO partners abroad that we don't care about their rights. That freedom of speech, the very foundation of American democracy, matters here, but it doesn't matter abroad. That our commitment to free speech and freedom of association, fixtures of our Constitution, end at our own borders. Is this the kind of message we want to send?

Make no mistake: the United States is being watched. Each day, members of this Congress on both sides of the aisle condemn violations of human rights abroad. Each day we debate whether the United States should associate at all with foreign regimes who refuse to embrace democratic ideals. Our neighbors around the world look to us as the definitive authority on democracy.

I think the words of the director of a family planning organization that receives our funding sums up the severe damage we do to our own credibility by incorporating an anti-democratic policy such as the gag rule into our foreign assistance program.

"We believe this requirement is profoundly anti-democratic and does a disservice to the legacy of the United States' fight for democracy," the director wrote. "Democracy is nourished and strengthened by open debate and freedom of expression; shackling the discussion of ideas impoverishes such public debate and, in doing so, weakens democracy . . . We are now in the difficult position of having to choose between needed funding for a historic project on the one hand, and essential democratic participation on the other. Either way, there is a cost to women's reproductive health and to democracy."

If the suppression of ideas with which some don't agree, and the use of economic power to crush dissent—are ideals you think the United States should export, then vote against this